

## What to Present in the Gospel, Part 2 - Acts 17:28-31 – November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2008

- Paul's been invited to address a meeting of the Aeropagus here on Mars Hill in Athens Greece on this, his second missionary journey.
- Luke, by the Holy Spirit, recorded what he said, and in so doing he's given us a template of sorts, on "What to Present in the Gospel."

- This is part two of that study. Paul is going to teach us not just how to present the Gospel, but what to present in the Gospel.

- Verses 22-23 are a teaching on "How to Present the Gospel."
- Verses 24-31 are a teaching on "What to Present in the Gospel."
- Verses 32-34 are a teaching on "What to expect from the Gospel."

### 1. Man falls short of the glory of God (Verses 24-25a)

- Paul starts at the beginning telling them that God created man, and man cannot create anything for God. Man falls short of God's glory.

### 2. Man is not superior or righteous (Verses 25b-26)

- Paul traces all mankind genetically back to Adam because he's keenly aware that Greeks believed themselves to be the superior race.
- He knows that if he's to make this unknown God known to them, he has to demolish their "man-god's" so they'll accept the "God-man."

### 3. Man needs to seek God to be saved (Verse 27)

- He knows that once they realize they're all sinners and not superior or righteous, they will now reach out and seek God for salvation.

### 4. Man now has a bridge back to God (Verses 28-29)

28 'For in him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.' 29 "Therefore since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by man's design and skill. v28 Paul then quotes their poets who said, "We are his offspring," to springboard into how we are God's offspring created in His image. v29 He says that because God made us in His image, we don't need any manmade images in order to worship Him. God is not like that. - In other words, we're God's offspring originally created by God, in fellowship with God, but separated from God, by sinning against God.

- I submit to you that Paul is connecting the dots, so-to-speak, in order to bridge the gap back to God by quoting from their own poets.

One commentator said it this way: Paul did not quote these men because they were prophets or because all their teaching was of God. He quoted them because these specific words reflected a Biblical truth, and by using them he could build a bridge to his pagan audience.

### 5. Man needs to repent and turn to God (Verse 30)

30 In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent.

- v30 Paul now talks about God's goodness to overlook their ignorance and forgive people everywhere who heed His command to repent.
- Paul ever so carefully and brilliantly communicates their culpability before God. He puts the onus on them to repent and turn to God.

"The Athenians have acknowledged in their altar inscription that they are ignorant of God, and Paul has been giving evidence of their ignorance. Now he declares such ignorance to be culpable."

John Stott

### 6. Man will one day be judged by God (Verse 31a)

31a For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. ...

- v31a Paul goes for the close, telling them that judgment day is coming and every man will be judged according to and by this God-man.
- He now talks about Jesus as not only being the appointed one, but the anointed one Who God has chosen for that great and final day.

One commentator said it best this way: "Paul progresses from knowing who God is (our Creator), to who we are (His offspring), to our responsibility before Him (to understand Him and worship Him in truth), to our accountability if we dishonor Him (judgment). Paul wasn't preaching a "soft" gospel. He boldly confronted the wrong ideas the Athenians had about God, and confronted them with the reality of coming judgment."

### 7. Man can only find salvation in Jesus Christ (Verse 31b)

31b ... He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead."

- v31b Paul brings it in for a landing by proclaiming and proving that all he has said is true because of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection.
- This is the bottom line, Jesus Christ and Him crucified. In other words, this was the only way the Athenian's could escape this judgment.
- Paul has just delivered a most fascinating presentation of the Gospel complete with man's need of Jesus Christ from front to finish.

One commentator said it this way: "Paul began what is unquestionably his most polished presentation—complete with good introduction, applicable illustrations, and sequential order of thought. In verse 24, he spoke of the greatness of God. In verse 25, he spoke of the goodness of God. In verses 26-27, he spoke of the government of God. In verses 28-29, he spoke of the glory of God. In verses 30-31, he spoke of the grace of God."

"He points to their own altars, he quotes their own poets, and he appeals to their common sense. He knew the way of putting the truth so as to attract and not repel; and though but few of the Areopagites were saved, yet a noble testimony was born among men of intelligence, who would talk of what they heard in many a company where else the gospel would have been unknown." Charles Spurgeon

- Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of this Mars Hill message, is that it contained "7" truths we would later call the "Romans Road."
- Paul hadn't yet written, by the Holy Spirit, the letter to the church in Rome, but when he would, it would include what he said in Athens.

**The Roman Road:**

1. There is none righteous, and there's no superior race (Romans 3:10)
2. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23)
3. Through one man, (Adam), sin entered the world separating us from God (Romans 5:12)
4. The judgment and wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life (Romans 6:23)
5. While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8)
6. If man will seek God, confess his sins, and believe in his heart, he will be saved (Romans 10:9-10)
7. All who call upon the name of the Lord will be saved (Romans 10:13)